Information Resource Center
American Embassy Buenos Aires

Environment Alert Service
Number 2, 2005

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● PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION: ENERGY NEEDS, CLEAN DEVELOPMENT, AND CLIMATE CHANGE
U.S. Department of State, Sustainable Development Partnerships. November 2005

Energy needs, clean development and climate change are complex, long-term challenges that require sustained commitment and focus on the part of all nations. Together with its partners around the world, the United States is accelerating efforts to develop cleaner and more efficient energy technologies as a means to improve economic and energy security, reduce harmful air and water pollution, and reduce the greenhouse gas intensity of the global economy. The United States has established a robust and flexible climate change policy that harnesses the power of markets and technological innovation, maintains economic growth, and encourages global participation. Major elements of the U.S. approach include implementing near-term policies and measures to slow the growth in greenhouse gas emissions, investing in climate change science, accelerating technology development, and promoting international collaboration. The United States is working in partnership with other governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to transform the way that energy is produced and consumed in ways that will improve the lives of billions of people.
http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/57489.pdf [pdf format, 28 pages]

● ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPREAD OF BIRD FLU
Josh Rothstein
Foundation for Environmental Security & Sustainability. September 2005

The report notes that the mobility of today's global economy and society makes prevention of avian influenza in every country an international concern. Moreover, addressing environmental links to the spread of avian influenza may provide essential information to delay, minimize, or even prevent a costly pandemic. The author identifies several environmental links that should be researched, including:
* Deforestation and other methods of habitat destruction affecting the routes of migratory birds.
* Farming environments that facilitate the spread of bird flu to other animals or humans.

* The human utilization of water sources that contact infected birds or animals.
* Market environments that facilitate the spread of avian influenza to other animals and humans.

The author contends that international cooperation in addressing these issues is essential. He concludes that once a pandemic begins, nations likely will devote their resources to the protection of their own population. Therefore, it is necessary to immediately commence international programs to identify environmental links contributing to the spread of avian influenza, and develop effective and appropriate countermeasures.

http://www.fess-global.org/issuebriefs/environmental_factors_affecting_the_spread_of_bird_flu.pdf [pdf format, 8 pages]

- LIQUID ASSETS: HOW DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND WATER MANAGEMENT POLICIES AFFECT FRESHWATER RESOURCES

Jill Boberg
The RAND Corporation. October 2005

This monograph examines the interaction between demographic factors and water resources, and how they influence the availability of water at the local level. The monograph focuses primarily on conditions in developing countries, and should be of interest to policymakers, academics and others concerned with the interaction between demographic issues and water and other environmental issues. The author addresses the question of whether there will be a global water crisis. She concludes that localized problems will undoubtedly continue, and more widespread problems may continue in some areas, depending on local physical, social, economic, and cultural conditions. However, she writes, a global water crisis can be averted, in part, by researching demographic variables that are less understood.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG358.pdf [pdf format, 154 pages]

- ADDRESSING OUR GLOBAL WATER FUTURE.

Center for Strategic and International Studies and Sandia National Laboratories.
September 2005

This White Paper outlines the major conclusions of the Global Water Futures project. Jointly conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and Sandia National Laboratories, the project's goal was to generate fresh thinking and concrete policy recommendations on how the United States can: 1. Better address future global water challenges; and 2. More efficiently leverage and deploy available technologies. The resulting White Paper makes the case for elevating the response to global water challenges to a strategic priority; identifies the most effective responses to global water challenges; and explores U.S. policy options, current and future. Consisting of four sections, the first section describes the nature and scope of the global water challenges that face the world. Sections two and three explore potential areas for innovation and synergy in policy, governance, capacity building, and the application of technologies. The final section examines how the United States should integrate water into its foreign policy.

http://www.csis.org/gsi/050928_gwf.pdf [pdf format, 134 pages]

- WORLD RESOURCES 2005 -- THE WEALTH OF THE POOR: MANAGING ECOSYSTEMS TO FIGHT POVERTY

World Resources Institute. August 2005

Published by the World Resources Institute in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program, United Nations Environment Program, and the World Bank, World Resources 2005 is the 11th in a series of biennial reports on global environment and governance issues published since 1984. The report explores the following propositions:

* Economic growth is the only realistic means to lift the poor out of extreme poverty in the developing world; but the capacity of the poor to participate in economic growth must be enhanced if they are to share in its benefits.
* The building blocks of a pro-poor growth strategy begin with natural resources. These provide the base upon which the vast majority of the poor now depend for their fragile existence, but over which they exercise little control, and therefore can't exercise full stewardship.
* The role of governance -transparent and accountable governance- is critical to fostering pro-poor growth and essential to ensuring that the engine of that growth, natural resource wealth, is managed wisely.

The authors note that much of what the report calls for is captured in the Millennium Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations in 2000. Building on this, the World Resources 2005 report shows how important pro-poor management of ecosystems is to attaining these goals. It presents a wealth of examples that demonstrate how nations can support a bottom-up approach to rural growth that begins naturally with the assets the poor already possess.

A 28-page guide to World Resources 2005, designed as a quick reference to the book for journalists, is available at http://pdf.wri.org/worldresources_2005_journalist_guide.pdf [pdf format, 228 pages]

Full report:

http://pdf.wri.org/wrr05_full.pdf [pdf format, 228 pages]

- CLIMATE CHANGE LEGISLATION IN THE 109TH CONGRESS

Brent D. Yacobucci

Congressional Research Service. September 9, 2005

Climate change and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are an issue in the 109th Congress, as they have been in past Congresses. Bills directly addressing climate change issues range from those focused primarily on climate change research to comprehensive emissions cap-and-trade programs for the six greenhouse gases covered under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Additional bills focus on GHG reporting and registries, or on power plant emissions of carbon dioxide as part of wider controls on pollutant emissions. Within several broad categories, the bills vary in their approaches to climate change issues. For example, some bills covering research issues focus solely on modeling the effects of future climate change, while others address the development of monitoring technologies. Bills focusing on technology deployment do so through tax incentives and credit-based programs within the United States, or through the promotion of deployment in developing countries. Bills with greenhouse gas registries may be voluntary or mandatory, and vary in the entities covered and the gases registered. Bills with emission reduction

requirements also vary in the entities covered, the gases limited, and the target emissions levels. Most notably, on August 8, 2005, President Bush signed the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-58, H.R. 6). Among other provisions, Title XVI of the bill establishes programs to promote the development and deployment of technologies to reduce greenhouse gas intensity. This report briefly discusses the basic concepts on which these bills are based, and compares major provisions of the bills in each of the following categories: climate change research, technology deployment, GHG reporting and registries, and emissions reduction programs.
http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/53680.pdf [pdf format, 18 pages]

- GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT 2005: KEY FINDINGS

United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization. November 2005

Each year about 13 million hectares of the world's forests are lost due to deforestation, but the rate of net forest loss is slowing down, thanks to new planting and natural expansion of existing forests, FAO announced today. The annual net loss of forest area between 2000 and 2005 was 7.3 million hectares/year -- an area about the size of Sierra Leone or Panama-- down from an estimated 8.9 million ha/yr between 1990 and 2000. This is equivalent to a net loss of 0.18 percent of the world's forests annually.
http://www.fao.org/forestry/foris/webview/forestry2/index.jsp?siteId=101&sitetreeId=16807&langId=1&geoId=0 [pdf format, 8 pages]

- HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA AND THE COASTAL LOUISIANA ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Jeffrey Zinn
Congressional Research Service. September 26, 2005

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused widespread damage and destruction to wetlands along the central Gulf Coast. Prior to these hurricanes, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had been seeking approval from the 109th Congress for a $1.1 billion multiyear program to construct five projects that would help to restore portions of the coastal Louisiana ecosystem by slowing the rate of wetland loss and restoring some wetlands. This funding would also be used to continue planning several other related projects. The state of Louisiana and several federal agencies have participated in the development of this program. This report introduces this program, discusses whether it might have muted the impacts of a hurricane of the magnitude and paths of Katrina or Rita, and whether the devastation caused by both hurricanes might cause the Corps and other restoration supporters to propose either altering aspects of this proposed program, or expanding it.
http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/54248.pdf [pdf format, 6 pages]

- A LONG LOOK AHEAD: NGOS, NETWORKS, AND FUTURE SOCIAL EVOLUTION

David Ronfeldt
RAND Corporation. 2005

This paper speculates about the future of the environmental movement as a function of its increasing use of network forms of organization and related strategies and technologies attuned to the information age. The paper does so by nesting the

movement's potential in a theoretical framework about social evolution. This framework holds that people have developed four major forms for organizing their societies: first tribes, then hierarchical institutions, then markets, and now networks. The emergence of a new, network-based realm augurs a major rebalancing in relations among government, market, and civil-society actors. In the near term (years), there will be continuing episodes of social conflict as some environmental groups press their case, often by using netwar and swarming strategies. Over the long term (decades), new policymaking mechanisms will evolve for joint communication, coordination, and collaboration among government, business, and civil-society actors. Today, it is often said that "government" or "the market" is the solution. In time, it may well be said that "the network" is the solution.
http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2005/RAND_RP1169.pdf [pdf format, 11 pages]

- INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE EFFORTS BEYOND 2012: REPORT OF THE CLIMATE DIALOGUE AT POCANTICO

Pew Center on Global Climate Change. November 2005

The report outlines the conclusions of the Climate Dialogue at Pocantico, a group of 25 from government, business, and civil society brought together by the Pew Center for a series of discussions exploring options for advancing the international climate effort post-2012. Dialogue participants call for a more flexible international framework allowing countries to take on different types of climate commitments. As a step toward that, the report urges the convening of a high-level political dialogue among major economies to begin scoping out post-2012 strategies. The report, International Climate Efforts Beyond 2012 – Report of the Climate Dialogue at Pocantico, describes several "elements" or policy approaches and ways they could be linked to one another under the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change. The elements include:
*Emission targets and trading, with targets varying in form, stringency, and timing;
*Agreements negotiated across the power, automotive, or other key sectors;
*Policy-based approaches committing countries to steps advancing both climate and development objectives without binding them to fixed emission limits;
*Stronger cooperation to develop long-term "breakthrough" technologies and to deploy existing and new technologies in developing countries; and
*New assistance to help highly vulnerable countries cope with urgent adaptation needs and support the development of comprehensive national adaptation strategies.
While multiple approaches could be pursued in parallel, the report says, a stronger overall effort may be possible only if they are linked in an integrated framework, giving countries the opportunity to negotiate across tracks and take on different types of commitments.
http://www.pewclimate.org/docUploads/PEW%5FPocantico%5FReport05%2Epdf [pdf format, 36 pages]

- LIVING WITH GLOBAL WARMING

Indur M. Goklany
National Center for Policy Analysis. September 14, 2005

Should we try to prevent global warming? Or should we use our resources to adapt to the consequences of warming? An argument for the former is that climate change will exacerbate existing problems — specifically, malaria, hunger, water shortage, coastal

flooding and threats to biodiversity. This is a particular concern for developing countries, many of which are beset by these problems but lack the economic and human resources needed to obtain and implement technologies that would finesse or cope with them. This paper analyzes costs and benefits of two different approaches. One approach — mitigation — would limit carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere largely by reducing emissions due to human activities. The Kyoto Protocol is an example of this approach. The second approach — adaptation — would reduce society's vulnerability to, or help cope with, the consequences of global climate change due to higher CO2 emissions.
http://www.ncpa.org/pub/st/st278/st278.pdf [pdf format, 23 pages]